



sarah bowen gallery
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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

B-SIDE

March 31, 2006 — April 30, 2006

Reception: Friday, March 31, 2006
7 – 9 P.M.

Performance by Matt Freedman and Tim Spelios
following the reception at the gallery

Sarah Bowen Gallery proudly presents **B-SIDE**, a group exhibition curated by **Caroline Cox**, with work by **Meredith Allen, Mary Carlson, Matt Freedman, Judith Page, Joyce Pensato, Tim Spelios, and Jim Torok**. These artists work in diverse mediums, with varied processes and materials, but share an affinity for creating idiosyncratic, image-oriented works that tap into convoluted emotional states. The artists employ a variety of strategies to this end: humor is imbued with a dark anxiety; the grotesque is largely absorbed by beauty; absurdity upends utilitarianism. Layers of ambiguity and tension permeate the work in B-Side, sharpening the emotional edge in each individual work and tying them to complexities and contradictions of the world outside the gallery.

Meredith Allen's new photographs record encounters on her daily treks with her dog Iggy, targeting other dogs and their human companions. Allen's canine subjects possess personas of human dimensions. Photographed from ground level, Allen's diminutive dogs hilariously exude a sinister and bizarre presence with a "what you lookin' at" attitude.

Mary Carlson creates sculptures of blood splats by attaching and intertwining small intensely red glass beads into an intricate swirling mass that both clings to and emerges from the wall. The eventual awareness of the bloody imagery brings this seductive, jewel-like construction into a more jarring visceral realm.

Matt Freedman's piece is a portrait of a young boy observed in the middle of a giddy but potent war cry. Freedman's twisted humor is brought to bear in this life-size sculpture of a wild-child whose bloated head is fitted out with a bear's nose, a lion's open fanged mouth and an elephant's eyes.

Judith Page starts with photographic portraits and intuitively applies colored layers of gel-like paint over the image obscuring everything except a few cropped features. These pieces are small scale and evocative of reliquaries. The lush paint layers, however, mutate into ominous constricting masks that amplify the grotesque and challenge a straight reading of beauty.

Joyce Pensato is well known and respected for her demented and deviant depictions of squeaky-clean cartoon characters. From her new series Pensato presents a fiendish painting of a clown, rendered with an aggressive brush stroke that weds the cathartic emotion of ab-ex masters to the mercurial psyche of the "joyous" clown.

Tim Spelios' installations often fuse absurdist ambiguity with deadpan humor. For B-SIDE, Spelios, a drummer since the age of eleven, has constructed a square drum set that is a functional instrument as well as a perplexing object. Spelios will play his square drum set in a performance with Matt Freedman after the opening.

Jim Torok employs a black humor to relate autobiographical stories and biting political observations in his cartoon storyboard paintings. With unassuming but lethal accuracy, these spare drawings confront the disconcerting chasm between our superficial notions of personal well being and the tenuous, irrational nature of American culture.

Joyce Pensato courtesy of Parkers Box and Jim Torok courtesy of Pierogi Gallery.

sarah bowen gallery is open **Wednesday through Sunday, 11am – 7 pm** and by appointment. The gallery is located at 210 North Sixth Street, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, NY, 11211. Directions: L Train to Bedford Avenue stop, take Driggs exit, walk one block south to Sixth Street, and then ½ block East. The gallery is located between Driggs and Roebling on the right hand side.